

**NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the Committee Report as APPROVED by the Board of Aldermen. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure that this is the Committee Report that was presented at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, you should check the Minutes of that meeting in order to confirm its approval, rejection or amendment. Do not rely on the accuracy of this information without first checking with the City Clerk.**

February 20, 2007

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**ON LAND USE**

The Committee on Land Use held a meeting on February 20, 2007, with Chairman Sean O'Donovan presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Maryann Heuston and Thomas Taylor also present and voting. Also present were Alderman William White, Mayor Joe Curtatone, Michael Lambert of the Mayor's Office, Phil Ercolini, Chris DaVita, Martha Ty and Carlene Campbell from SPCD, Katie Brillantes, Arthur Jameson, Consultant Jay Wickersham and interested members of the public.

Mayor Curtatone addressed the committee and stated that the proposed overlay district and new zoning would help to effectuate the development of Union Square and bring value into the area.

Mr. Wickersham told the members that his firm has been involved in the zoning for Union Square for the past 2 years and that the process has been inclusive. The city will restore transit and businesses that can be accessed by pedestrian traffic, as public benefits require ground control retail to allow pedestrians on sidewalks, thereby increasing safety in the area. He also said that the PUD-C area was examined for density and height and that the proposal calls for a height increase to 120 feet, (10 stories), noting that 10 story buildings would not fill the entire development. The proposed zoning would enhance the project and be beneficial in ensuring that a percentage of the zoning includes space for artists and affordable housing. The overall package, Mr. Wickersham said, would not have harmful effects on the neighborhood. Developers would have to seek approval from the city for their designs and because Somerville has a Design Review Committee, Mr. Wickersham believes that developers would be more likely to adhere to the city's design guidelines. He also stated that incentives would be offered to developers providing public meeting spaces.

Aldermen Heuston and White suggested that written language should be in place in the zoning requirements to help neighborhoods with respect to permitted uses. Mayor Curtatone, responding to a question from Alderman Taylor, told the members that the Board of Aldermen had approved a Home Rule Petition regarding linkage and historical preservation, but the legislature hasn't acted on it yet. Mayor Curtatone also said that the city is committed to bringing affordable housing to the district and that it would be a disincentive if the city had not demanded that 15% of the development be affordable housing. He further stated that developers would be willing to develop the area if incentives are in place.

Martha Ty reviewed the Planning Board's report with the committee and told the members that the Planning Board:

- Recommended changes to the Arts overlay district boundaries,
- Added artist's studio use as a permitted use.
- Recommended that the artist's affordable housing be decreased from 50% to 25%.
- Recommended that open space guidelines be stated in the PUD-C and C1 and looked at comprehensively and
- Recommended creating design guidelines.

Attorney Adam Dash said that he is pleased with the Planning Board's recommendations and noted that predictability is important in development.

Vickie Choitze said that the neighborhood groups would like to be contacted for inclusion in the public process and noted that her group is in favor of the development of Union Square.

Alderman Taylor requested the following information:

- What the impact on development would be if the height limit was reduced to 8 stories,
- What the impact on development would be if the affordable housing percentage goes from 12.5% to 15% as recommended,
- What the impact on development would be if the transit station were put in the middle of Union Square.

Alderman Heuston requested:

- That the Planning Board staff provide alternate, but not restrictive, wording for Section F, that the design and step down of development allow for increased light circulation and less shadowing, and that the wording be more specific with regards to recommendations,
- An opinion as to whether the zoning could be changed to make it more forceful

No Papers were acted on.

---

Alderman Sean T. O'Donovan, Chairman  
Committee on Land Use

## **COMMITTEE REPORT**

Report of the Committee on Land Use,  
February 20, 2007

In Board of Aldermen

---

---

---

---

---

Clerk